



## Virginia Commission on Youth

October 20, 2010

1:00 p.m.

House Room C

### AGENDA

#### **Attending:**

Senators Yvonne Miller, Harry Blevins

Delegates Mamyé BaCote, Robert Brink, Mark Cole, Christopher Peace (electronic) and Anne Crockett-Stark

Citizen member Gary Close

#### **Not Attending:**

Senator Edward Houck, Delegate Beverly Sherwood, and citizen members Anthony Dale and Joy Myers

#### **Staff Attending:**

Amy M. Atkinson, Leah Hamaker, Joyce Garner

### **I. Call to Order and Opening Remarks**

*Senator Yvonne B. Miller, Chair*

Senator Miller called the meeting to order at 10:00 and welcomed everyone to the fourth meeting of the Commission's 2010 study year.

There is a re-ordering of the agenda such that Commissioner Stewart's presentation will precede the Department of Juvenile Justice's.

### **II. Update on the Development of a Comprehensive Plan for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services**

*James W. Stewart, III, Commissioner*

*Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services*

As background, Commissioner Stewart outlined the provisions of Item 304.M (2010), which required DBHDS to develop a comprehensive plan for children's behavioral health services, both inpatient and community-based, as close to children's homes as possible. The interim report was submitted to the General Assembly on October 1, 2010. The final report is due November 1, 2011. This will be the first comprehensive plan for children's MH/SA services and will provide guidance for both the General Assembly and DBHDS.

To assist in developing the plan, DBHDS convened 3 panels on which a total of 24 people served, representing state agencies, service providers, and families and advocates.

The power point presentation addressed Process and Target Population. The category of Challenges includes "inadequate capacity, resulting in waits for service" (when action must be taken in a timely manner) and some localities having little or nothing to offer children in need. A pressing challenge is lack of measurable, quantifiable standards by which to measure and maintain quality control. DBHDS needs to be able to evaluate services and/or monitor results.

Recommendations address the identification of gaps and development of partnerships and strategies.

Delegate Brink asked for clarification in DBHDS' priorities. Commissioner Stewart discussed briefly the process for identifying gaps and presenting recommendations to the 2012 General Assembly.

Senator Blevins raised questions about the shortage of child psychiatrists and other clinicians key to child mental health services. Specifically, Senator Blevins asked about students in medical school seeking a degree in psychiatry.

Mr. Close noted that recommendations may carry a big price tag. Commissioner Stewart responded that some recommendations will not be expensive. Both the Commissioner and Mr. Close concurred that prevention offers the cheaper option.

### **III. Profiles of Committed Juveniles in Virginia's Juvenile Correctional Centers**

*Mark Gooch, Chief Deputy Director  
Department of Juvenile Justice*

Mr. Gooch introduced Department staff members Steve Puller and Lynette Holmes, who are available to assist in answering specific member questions. He introduced his powerpoint presentation as speaking to JCC population trends, recidivism, and special projects/initiatives.

In discussing the increase/decrease in numbers, he reviewed commitments by locality and noted that felony intake cases are decreasing by 28%. Southwest Virginia has the lowest number; some counties have none; Henrico County and Richmond City are highest.

Mr. Gooch provided a profile of juveniles being admitted to the Reception & Diagnostic Center. The process takes 4-5 weeks. Lengths of stay are increasing because of the severity of crimes placing them in custody. Virginia laws have, in some cases, affected the numbers.

He recommended, with shorter periods, to start reentry at time of the juvenile's commitment. He provided details of successes of a model instituted by the state of Missouri model.

The Department now has a video for incoming juveniles, which is considered a particularly successful special project/initiative.

Delegate Crockett-Stark expressed surprised that there were no commitments in Southwest Virginia and asked why that might be. Mr. Gooch indicated that those counties historically take care of their own.

Delegate BaCote noted asked about data indicating the Department keeps juvenile offenders longer and asked whether there were more successes because of the new length of stay. Who has higher rate of recidivism – juveniles with short stays or those with longer stays? Is there data to indicate which juveniles come back as adults? Ms. Lewis indicated that there is a tracking mechanism currently in place.

Delegate BaCote asked about a family link at St. James Church in her district. The faith-based mentoring program is currently up and running and going well. It may expand to other sites, but the Department needs more churches to participate if they are to expand outreach.

Ms. Close noted that it has been his observation that the decrease in misdemeanors relates to best practices in judicial system, which says "don't incarcerate those who can be treated without a charge/conviction." The actual number of cases coming to court has not changed.

Further, Mr. Close asked to what extent the Department identifies how many juveniles have gang affiliation coming in. Mr. Pullen indicated that the Department has to report gang affiliation.. Mr. Close responded that his experience has led him to believe there is a definite

correlation between gang affiliation and recidivism and suggested the Department might want to track that specifically.

Senator Miller, referring to slides on intake, asked whether the Department offers more comprehensive services than schools K-12 and questioned whether Virginia is “upside down” in not giving a priority to early intervention and prevention.

She asked about the severity of offenses and what those numbers are. Mr. Pullen answered that crimes against persons are actually reducing; these are, however, the most serious offense the Department must address as it plans treatment of juveniles.

**IV. Launch of *The Collection of Evidence-based Practices for Children and Adolescents with Mental Health Treatment Needs, 4th Edition* (Web Version)**

*Leah Hamaker, Senior Legislative Policy Analyst*

Ms. Hamaker acknowledged the contributions of the study Advisory Group and led members through an on-line web “tour” of several sections of the newly-revised publication and demonstrated new features for user-friendliness, e.g., a search feature. Senator Miller and Ms. Hamaker both acknowledged the contributions of the Department of Legislative Automated Systems (DLAS) on this project. The print version will be published in late Fall. Members were provided a sample bookmark, which is disseminated in quantity throughout the states to familiarize service providers, clinicians, parents, teachers, etc. with information available through the Collection.

Senator Miller commended staff for their work.

**V. Presentation of 2010 Draft Findings and Recommendations for Juvenile Offender Reentry and Barriers to Kinship Care in Virginia**

*Amy M. Atkinson, Executive Director*

Ms. Atkinson provided an overview of both studies and their Advisory Groups’ process in developing findings and recommendations which move the Commission toward decision-making prior to the 2011 General Assembly Session.

The draft Juvenile Reentry document will be posted to the Commission’s website as the source for citizen review and comment. The Advisory Group for Kinship Care meets again on November 4. That study’s refined draft members will be posed immediately thereafter. The document presented to Commission on Youth members on November 15 will reflect the final work of the Kinship Care Advisory Group, along with public comments received between now and then.

**VI. Adjourn**

Senator Miller called for public comment and recognized Susan Lawrence of Lexington, Virginia, who introduced herself as parent of a child treated in residential care. Ms. Lawrence offered comments specifically related to her concerns about The Pines Residential Treatment Center, a facility of Psychiatric Solutions Inc. (PSI). She contended that Virginia is not providing adequate oversight to its treatment facilities, either at the licensing or on-going monitoring phase. She questioned the extent to which facilities are being held accountable for compliance with state regulations and called for open review of details surrounding reports of abuse and neglect of residents at The Pines. Ms. Lawrence read from a list of suggestions for improving the system, including: posting licenses on-line; requiring the name of the facility and its corporate identification; having police from the locality investigate crimes reported to have been committed at a facility; and having available a listing of licensed staff at each facility. Mr. Close, as a Commonwealth’s Attorney, asked questions of Ms. Lawrence about allegations against PSI facilities in general and The Pines in particular, specifically that there were criminal acts not being appropriately reported and investigated.

There were no other public comments received.

Senator Miller adjourned the meeting at 3:30.

Public comment will be received at this meeting.

This is an electronic meeting with the following meeting sites:

Mechanicsville

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